

SUPERFUND

Fact Sheet

United Chrome Products, Inc.
Corvallis, Oregon



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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EPA To Review United Chrome Cleanup

During the next five months, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will review the cleanup at the United Chrome Products, Inc. Superfund site. This review will make sure the cleanup is effective, and that people and the environment are protected as the cleanup continues. The review will also help EPA develop a transition plan for discontinuing EPA involvement after cleanup goals are met.

During the review, EPA will answer these kinds of questions:

- Are groundwater extraction, treatment and monitoring systems operating as planned?
- Is fencing at the site continuing to keep people from walking across the property so they are not exposed to contamination?
- Do the cleanup goals still make sense?
- Is there new information that should cause EPA to rethink parts of the cleanup?

EPA's review will include inspecting the site, interviewing site contacts and reviewing technical data and documents, such as operation and maintenance reports. Some of this work will be done by EPA's contractor, CH2M Hill.

The upcoming review is the third "Five-Year Review" since the groundwater extraction and treatment system was installed in 1988. EPA will review the cleanup at United Chrome every five years until contamination levels are low enough to allow for unlimited and unrestricted use of the property.

EPA Welcomes Your Comments

EPA welcomes citizen participation and comments during the Five-Year Review process. If you would like to review draft reports, meet with EPA staff, or get involved in other ways, please contact the EPA staff listed at the end of this fact sheet.

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United Chrome Products Site Background

The United Chrome site is a former chrome-plating facility three miles south of Corvallis in the Airport Industrial Research Park. The City of Corvallis owns the 1.5 acre site, but previously leased the property to United Chrome Products, Inc. The company did electroplating at the site from 1956 to 1985. During this time, plating tanks and a disposal pit leaked large amounts of hexavalent chromium to soil, and shallow and deep groundwater aquifers. In 1984, after determining the site posed a threat to human health and the environment, EPA placed the site on the National Priorities List, EPA's list of the nation's most contaminated sites.

In 1987, EPA began an extensive cleanup at the United Chrome site, including removing contaminated debris and hazardous soils, extracting and treating groundwater, and re-routing a drainage ditch to keep contaminated water from entering the local surface water drainage network.



Soil is excavated from the location of former plating tanks, September 18, 2000.



Following removal of 1,956 tons of contaminated soil, the excavations are backfilled with clean soil, September 29, 2000.

In 1988, the City of Corvallis began managing cleanup activities at the site under legal agreements with EPA. In 2000, after further studies revealed two additional hot spots with high chromium levels, the City removed 1,956 tons of soil and disposed of it at a permitted hazardous waste landfill. Since this removal, contamination levels in the upper aquifer have further declined.

In 1992, the U.S. District Court, EPA, the state of Oregon and the City of Corvallis signed a consent

decree which legally binds the City to perform cleanup actions and to continue extracting and treating groundwater until cleanup goals are met.

In addition to treating groundwater, the City is also evaluating off-site sediments in nearby drainage ditches. The purpose of this evaluation is to make sure birds, fish and plants are not being harmed by contamination from the site. If the City finds that unacceptable risks exist, EPA may require additional cleanup actions.

Cleanup Moves Forward

"The City has done an excellent job managing the site," says EPA Project Manager Alan Goodman. "Cleanup goals will be met around 2004, if all goes as planned."

To date, the City of Corvallis has extracted about 32,000 pounds of chromium and 30.5 million gallons of contaminated groundwater from the shallow aquifer beneath the site. About 120 pounds of chromium and 47 million gallons of groundwater have been extracted from the deep aquifer. As a result, all but three of the 23 upper zone groundwater extraction wells have met cleanup goals, and all but two of the lower zone extraction wells have met cleanup goals.

Because so much of the cleanup has been completed, the City has decommissioned major portions of the groundwater treatment system. The on-site treatment plant has been removed and 39 extraction and monitoring wells have been decommissioned. The remaining portions of the groundwater extraction system are in good condition and have several years of serviceable life.

Do Cleanup Goals Still Make Sense?

Since EPA signed the cleanup plan, or Record of Decision (ROD), in 1986, many things have changed: the federal drinking water standard for chromium has changed from 0.05 parts per million (ppm) to 0.1 ppm; the site conditions and use have changed; and the Airport Industrial Research Park no longer relies on a private well, as public water and sewer were extended to the site in 1988.

Due to these and other changes, as part of the Five-Year Review, EPA will re-evaluate whether the cleanup plan and goals still make sense. EPA will focus on how and where groundwater cleanup goals need to be met, and whether cleanup goals should be changed. One issue up for discussion is whether to measure cleanup success using average, site-wide chromium concentrations or well-by-well concentrations. If major changes are needed, EPA will notify the public and take steps to revise the Record of Decision.

Future Site Use

The United Chrome site is included in the Corvallis Airport 20-Year Master Plan, and is zoned for general industrial use. Airport planners see the site as a prime location for additional fuel storage in the future. A propane storage and distribution terminal was recently constructed on the northeast portion of the site.

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Visit the EPA Website:

EPA Region 10 website:
www.epa.gov/r10earth/
click on "Index"
click on "U" for United Chrome

For people with disabilities: Please contact Deborah Neal at 1 800 424-4372, extension 0115 (voice), if you have any special requests for reasonable accommodations. For TTY users, please call the Federal Relay Service at 1 800 877-8339 and give the operator Deborah Neal's phone number. Please provide one week notice for special requests not related to ongoing programs and services.